

Hampton CITY PAGE

Your Tax Dollars at Work

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CITY OF HAMPTON ON 1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS

Recommended City Budget: Here's an Overview

Each year, the Hampton City Manager provides a recommended budget to City Council for their consideration. The budget covers costs for a variety of services, including public safety, education, parks and recreation, public works and street repairs, and many others.

The recommended budget takes into account projected revenues and expenses, the cost for new initiatives, and areas of potential savings. The City Council then conducts three public hearings on the budget. The first occurred last night. There will be two more on May 5 and May 12 at 7:30 pm in City Hall Council Chambers. Final budget approval will occur May 12.

Growth in real estate assessments and sales related taxes, as well as savings from our operations, will help generate significant revenue in the coming fiscal year.

The total city budget for fiscal year 2005 is almost \$345.2 million. This includes approximately \$167.7 million for schools. Total projected natural growth in local revenues is approximately \$9.6 million, a 5.3 percent increase over fiscal year 2004. The recommended budget includes a decrease in real estate tax from \$1.27 to \$1.25 per \$100 assessed value.



Also included in the recommended budget is a variety of measures that will lead to cost savings and a balanced budget. These include salary savings through attrition; solid waste costs being covered by user fees; Health Department savings; reorganization of Economic Development and Retail Development departments; travel restrictions on departments; elimination of funding for some non-city programs; and deferral or reduction of some capital projects. Many new initiatives incorporated in next year's budget focus on public safety. These initiatives include the addition of five new police officers to meet increased demand in the Coliseum Central and Northampton areas; addition of two crime scene technicians; increased operating/overtime funding for Police and Fire;

enhanced training and pay incentives for paramedics. Other initiatives include the addition of new Economic Development positions to work with existing businesses; increased funding for Parks and Recreation to enhance city beautification and school grounds maintenance; funding for downtown pier repair or replacement; a study for a new tax billing system; and replacement of city software.

Remember, this is a budget that has the potential to change depending on the final decisions made concerning the State budget, which, as City Page went to press, had not yet been adopted. If the State passes a budget that is closer to the House version, the City Council will have to decide whether to hold off on the proposed real estate tax reduction or cut some of the investments this budget currently funds.

Want more information about Hampton's Budget? Visit www.hampton.gov/budget. Catch the budget hearings on your local City Channel 47 or sign up for eNews at <http://enews.hampton.gov> to receive free updates about city issues.

Retail Sales an Important Part of the Budget

The tax revenues from retail sales play a key role in our City's budget. Hampton's retail development strategies are working. The percentage of taxable sales showed its largest increase in seven years. The majority of the increase, a 15 percent growth, occurred in the later part of the year. Overall sales totaled \$1.1 billion, a 3.1% increase from 2003. This positive upward trend is expected to continue with the opening of numerous new stores and restaurants in Hampton.

There are a number of contributing factors in the Coliseum Central area, the City's main retail hub. The two main contributors are The Power Plant, where anchor store Bass Pro Shops opened in November 2003, and the anticipation of the new convention center and Embassy Suites Hotel, scheduled to open in Spring 2005. These developments are creating a new level of interest in a district that is already known for its central location in the region. This was recently demonstrated by a vote of confidence from nine residential developers who proposed to develop 24-acres as high-end, high density residential next to the convention center site.

Recent Power Plant announcements, scheduled for a holiday season opening, include McFadden's Restaurant and Saloon, The Cactus Café and the Funky Parrot.

McFadden's will offer high-quality food, a dance venue, an ultimate sports viewing area and classic tavern games. Cactus Café will offer a themed restaurant, upscale billiards, and a first rate nationally recognized comedy club. The Funky Parrot will provide a dance and live music venue. Because of this Rising Tide new retailers and



restaurants are seeing the value of locating to Hampton. Several shopping center owners within the district chose to invest millions of dollars and consequently lured retailers and restaurants who previously would not consider locating to Hampton. Outback Steakhouse opened at the Coliseum Mall, Cracker Barrel will locate at Mercury Plaza, and O'Charley's will join the district at Coliseum Marketplace.

"This is a significant turn-around from previous years," said Mayor Charles A. Wornom. "We are seeing the same things that happened when we invested in the Coliseum over 30 years ago. It is clear evidence that our economic development strategies are having a major positive impact."

Be sure to stay tuned for future announcements on the City Page and on the City's website at www.hampton.gov.

Additional Coliseum Central new, planned or expanding businesses include:

The Power Plant of Hampton Roads
• Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World
• Joe's Crab Shack

- McFadden's Restaurant and Saloon
- Lone Star Steakhouse
- Johnny Carino's - Family Italian Dining
- Cactus Café
- The Funky Parrot
- Starbucks
- Coldstone Creamery
- Sonic Drive-In
- Jake's Garage
- Five

Other Coliseum Central Businesses Locations

- Outback Steakhouse
- Cracker Barrel
- O'Charley's Family Restaurant
- Starbucks
- Ross's Dress for Less
- Burlington Coat Factory Expansion
- Steve and Barry's Athletic Apparel
- Goodman Jewelers
- Corolla's Surf Shop
- Embassy Suites
- Savannah Suites
- Extended Stay America

Housing Discrimination is Illegal!

Did you know that April is Fair Housing Month?

Learn more and know your rights! Have you experienced housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status and handicap? If so, you may have been a victim of a fair housing violation. If you would like more information on Virginia Fair Housing Law, please contact Angelique Lenoir at 727-6460.